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four Quarters

The Catholic College and the Catholic Writer

A Symposium

• Page 16

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The House of Cards

• John A. Lynch

I REMEMBER it as if it were yesterday. Captain Decker came out of the Flora promptly at seven that evening—it was his trait to be prompt—and after we had greeted each other he motioned down the street and a Fiat that was parked there started up and stopped again in front of the hotel. The Fiat was driven by Guglielmo, the captain's chauffeur, a short, heavy-set Italian whom I had met only the day before and who barely squeezed in behind the wheel.

"Hold on a minute," said the captain, as I started toward the car. "I forgot the Scotch." Then he turned directly to me and added, not so much as an afterthought but as something he had been ready to say: "Where we're going tonight, you'd better have a tie." Before I could answer he had disappeared inside the hotel again. I went over to talk to Guglielmo.

"*Come sta?*" I asked, using what little Italian I knew, squatting on the curb so that I could see into the car.

"*Bene!*" he answered. "Everything is good tonight, no?"

"I hear it will be a big party," I said. "I brought some chocolate for the children." I had two large Hershey bars in my pocket and I drew them out for him to see.

"*Buono!*" he exclaimed. He leaned across the seat to me. "You are very fortunate, you Americans." He stared into my eyes for a moment. "You are very fortunate."

Captain Decker returned with the bottle under his jacket and lowered himself into the back seat. I got in beside Guglielmo. As he withdrew the bottle, the captain directed Guglielmo to head out to the north and east, where we were to pick up several other people. Then the captain handed me a khaki necktie. "It will look a lot better," he said. We drove out the Corso d'Italia and through the Porta Pia.

After a few blocks the captain tapped me on the shoulder. "There's Mussolini's place," he said. "On the right."

"Villa Torlonia," Guglielmo muttered with disgust, as if he had already driven past it too many times to the captain's delight.

"Not so good, Guglielmo?" the captain asked. He laughed quietly in the back seat. "Turn here," he said finally.

"Luigi?" Guglielmo asked, turning his head as he drove the automobile into a dark, tree-lined street.

"Yes," the captain said. "Think you can find it?"

"Find it?" said Guglielmo. "Who has been here more often than I?"

The car went faster now, turning many corners, taking what seemed a very indirect route. I lost track of where we were, but remember that we went a few blocks on the wide Corso Trieste, then turned left again. Presently we drew alongside a high wall and stopped by a dark iron gate. But before Captain

Decker could get out, three people appeared from the darkness and came through the gate to the car. We opened the doors and they got in without waiting for introductions. There were two girls with Luigi. I don't know just whom I had expected, but somehow I hadn't thought that they would be Italians.

One of the girls got into the front seat with me and I had to force my hip into Guglielmo, who had already moved as far to the left as he could and had one fat arm out the window. Luigi and the other girl climbed in back with Captain Decker, the girl seating herself closely between them.

"This is Jim," the captain said, introducing me. "We were in college together. Fraternity brothers. Jim's just in town for a couple of days."

"Yes," I said. "We were at college together, although several years apart."

"And this is Cecilia," the captain said, introducing the girl beside me. She was slim, with blonde hair, and rather commonly made up.

"Jeem," she said. "*Giacomo.*" Then she laughed, suddenly and shrilly, and placed her hand on my cheek. "It is nice," she said, the laughter dying away.

"And this is Maria," the captain continued. "She is my girl. Eh, Maria?"

"But what does your wife say, in Pittsburgh?" she asked, and began laughing shrilly, as Cecilia had. Captain Decker joined in with her.

"I am Luigi," the man said finally. The laughing died down. "Maria is my wife, Cecilia is my sister. I am Luigi." Then he too began laughing, but it was not shrill, nor even glad.

Guglielmo had the car under way by this time, and as he turned his head slightly again, I noticed the look of contempt on his face. Beneath his breath I think he must have been swearing, and I expected him any moment to spit heavily out the window.

"Straight ahead," said the captain. We came out into the Piazza Verbano, made another turn, and within two more blocks stopped before a second gate, beyond which several lights shone. Here we unloaded, and as Guglielmo drove up the street to park, the captain led us toward the house. As we went through the door, he caught my eye. "Do as the Romans do," he said.

An hour later a lieutenant of the corps of engineers was pressing me for the third time to hear if I was the fellow who had just been to Capri, and when I was able to make it clear to him that I had never been to Capri but had just come down from Volterra, I broke away from the party and went in search of Luigi. Luigi was, I had quickly noticed, not quite acceptable socially —most likely because of the relationship of his wife to the captain—and as the party had progressed from one room to another, from the front of the house to the rear, all the while accompanied by the sound of glasses and bottles, and a phonograph playing out-of-date American records, I had caught but few glimpses of him.

Now he sat alone at the front of the house, on the bottom step of the gilded and carpeted staircase that

led to the second floor. A long-necked, green-glass bottle was at his side, and on the floor between his legs he was laying down a deck of cards in imitation of the floor's parquet design.

"If you've been drinking whiskey, you ought to lay off the wine, Luigi," I said. He moved over on the step to make room for me.

"It is all the same after a while," he said. He offered me the bottle but I refused, and he set it at his side again.

"What was your name?" he asked, glancing at me.

"Jim."

"*Si, Giacomo.*" He leaned over and scraped his cards together. "Do you work in the city, too?"

"No," I said. "I'm on pass."

"*Sopra passo?*" He looked at me curiously.

"From the front," I said. "I'm staying at the rest camp. I just met Captain Decker on the street the other day. We're old friends."

"*Si,*" he said thoughtfully. "*Il campo.* You do not work in the city. You are a soldier who fights."

"That's right," I said. "There are some."

Luigi's eyes brightened, but he said nothing more for a while. Then, leaning over, he gathered his cards and began building with them, leaning one card against another, so that they would stand erect. He handled the cards deftly, and in a short time he had built a house of cards to three levels. For the top card he had saved a king, and this one he placed carefully.

"*Capite?*" he said, pointing to the card. "Do you understand?"

"The king," I said. He had placed the card face up.

"The king!" said Luigi. He grasped the wine bottle and made a pass at the cards and the house collapsed between his feet. "*Finito!*" he said, grinning.

"The king," I repeated. "*Finito!*"

"*Finito!*" Luigi said. Then he shouted, and standing up he stamped on the cards that lay at his feet.

When he had stopped, Luigi looked at me and offered the bottle again.

"Sure," I said. "Why not?" I tipped the bottle and took a long swallow; it was the wine of white grapes. "*Molto buono!*" I said, tasting the wine still in my mouth.

Luigi sat down beside me and I took another swallow before handing the bottle back to him. The cards were scattered on the floor, and when next I looked at them I saw, just beyond, a pair of brown shoes and the pink of an officer's trousers. I looked up carefully, and a major I had never seen before was standing in front of us. The two top buttons of his blouse were open and he was obviously drunk. With red eyes he stared down at us on the step.

In one hand he held an empty glass, and with the other he pointed at Luigi's wine bottle. "What's in the bottle?" he asked.

"White wine," I said. "But it's all gone."

"*Niente,*" Luigi said, looking up at the major. Luigi started to laugh and he turned the bottle upside down; a little trickle of wine ran out on the floor. "*Niente vino,*" Luigi

said, sadly, still looking at the major.

As suddenly as he had appeared, the major turned and walked away.

"Who is he?" I asked Luigi.

"I don't know," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "He is here every time, though. They say he has been at the front, that he had a command, but is retired now. I do not know why he comes. He does not join in, he only watches. He is always drunk."

We said nothing further, and Luigi began assembling his cards, some of which the major had scattered into the hallway when he left. Several of the cards were wet with the wine Luigi had spilled and he brushed them off on his trousers. When he had the deck complete, he picked up the wine bottle and walked off through a doorway behind the stairs. Presently he emerged with a fresh bottle of wine.

Before he sat down again, he took a small glass from his pocket and offered it to me. I held it and he filled it with the wine. Then he took the deck of cards and began to build another house on the floor, leaning the cards one against the other as he had before. This time he saved a jack until the last. Looking at me, he thrust out his chin and covered his upper lip with his lower. "*Capite?*" he asked.

"Mussolini," I said.

Luigi swung the wine bottle and the house of cards collapsed as the first one had.

"*Finito!*" Luigi said. "*Il Duce!*"

Then we shouted together, and jumping up we began kicking the cards back and forth on the floor between us.

"*Finito!*" Luigi shouted. "*Il Duce, finito!*"

When I had sat down on the bottom step again, Luigi was still looking at the cards. He had spilled more of the wine and several of the cards lay in a little puddle of it. Suddenly he turned and disappeared through the doorway again. I got the cards together, wiping them on my trousers as Luigi had done.

When Luigi came back he no longer had the wine, but was carrying a half loaf of bread and a quarter of a white cheese.

"Where's the wine?" I asked.

"*Niente,*" Luigi said, sitting down.

I looked at him, but knew he had not drunk it. Out of some equable sixth sense he must have put the bottle back where he had found it. And out of the same sense he had hastened to get something to eat.

"*Formaggio?*" he asked, offering a piece of the cheese. He had cut it with a long-bladed jack-knife, and was now cutting a piece from the loaf of bread.

"*Grazie,*" I said, taking both the cheese and the piece of bread. It was goat cheese and had a strong taste after the wine. When Luigi had cut some for himself, I handed him the pack of cards I had picked up.

We sat together on the step, eating the cheese and the bread, feeling very warm and friendly. For a long time we did not speak.

Then, without turning to me, but looking straight ahead, Luigi said quietly, "*Giacomo,* did you meet the German woman?"

I hesitated. "A German? No."

"They say that she is very pretty," Luigi went on. "Captain Decker says that she is very pretty."

I turned to Luigi, but he had taken out his cards and was shuffling them, and staring at the floor. "Here?" I asked. "Is she here? In this house?"

"She is the one they call Teresa," Luigi said, shuffling his cards.

I tried to remember, but I could not recall having met a Teresa. There was Luigi's wife, Maria, and Cecilia, with whom I had come, the hostess whose name was Cattarina. I vaguely remembered a second Maria, a Francesca.

I would find her, but before I did, there was something I had to know. "Luigi," I asked, "last year, did the German soldiers, too, come here?"

"*Tedeschi? Si.* Many times. But they do not dance. They drink but they do not dance."

I got up and walked through the hallway, toward the back of the house. Ahead of me I could hear the high-pitched voices of the women. I heard a bottle break somewhere, and someone laughing, and through it all the phonograph playing.

In a passageway between two rooms at the back of the house I found the major who had asked us for a glass of wine. He was sitting on a cane chair in the passageway, with no glass now. In the farther room the phonograph was playing and there was dancing, and along the wall half a dozen officers hovered, but none of them noticed the major. He sat with his eyes shut, his head rocking slightly on his chest.

"Major," I said, squatting by his side, "do you know which one is the German girl?"

His red eyes opened and he looked ahead stupidly. His hand went to his chest and he tried to button his blouse, but his hand fumbled and he let it drop into his lap.

"The German girl, sir," I said. "Did you know there was one here?"

He didn't answer, but stared straight ahead. I followed his gaze and he was looking at the spot on the floor where the bottle had broken. A girl with a short dress was pushing the glass to the side of the room with her foot. When the major finally looked at me his eyes were blank, and I wondered if he had heard my question at all.

He fumbled at his blouse again, this time managing to fasten one button. Then, quite slowly, his hand went out and he pointed across the room. His eyes opened wide and in the redness of them there welled an expression of pain and anger. Captain Decker was just coming into the room from the other side and clinging to his arm was the girl who must be Teresa. Her hair was honey blonde and her figure very full, though not heavy, and she was perhaps the prettiest girl there.

"Her brother is with the German army," the major said. "A captain with the German army. I fought him. They harbor her here. That's why I hate her!" He spoke the words slowly, and when he had, he looked up at me with his angry red eyes. "That's why I watch her!"

Then his head settled on his chest again. He made no effort to move when I took his hand and put it back in his lap.

I returned to the front of the house and sat down again on the stairway with Luigi. He cut me another piece of bread, and some cheese, and as I sat eating, he shuffled his cards. Then he laid them on the floor between his legs and began playing a game of solitaire. He was just working out a run in spades when Captain Decker came in. I expected that he would have Teresa with him, but instead it was Luigi's wife, Maria. The captain looked remarkably sober, but Maria seemed hardly able to stand.

"Why don't you come on back?" the captain said to me.

"I'm all right," I said. "I was back for a while. I've been talking to Luigi."

"He's drunk," the captain said.

I looked down at the captain's shoes; they were scuffed in several places now. "It doesn't make any difference," I said.

"You ought to leave him alone," the captain said dryly.

Luigi muttered under his breath, and reaching down gathered up his cards. He shuffled them carefully, not looking up.

"He hasn't been showing you that card house, has he?" the captain said quickly.

"Sure," I said. "Build it up and tear it down. It kind of makes sense."

Maria spoke hurriedly in Italian and stamped her foot. She pulled at the captain's sleeve, but he ignored her.

"He hasn't used that card he made himself, has he?" the captain asked.

"I don't think so," I said. "Which one is that?"

"He made one himself, with a picture of Uncle Sam on it, supposed to be the United States. He builds the card house and puts this one on top, then knocks it over."

"I only saw him do it with the king and the jack," I said. "Anyway, I didn't know he could draw."

"That's not the point!" the captain said, raising his voice.

"No?" I said. "What is then?"

The captain didn't answer, but said something to Maria who was tugging at his arm again.

"What about Teresa?" I said, looking up at him. "Why didn't you tell me about her before we came?"

The captain started, then looked quickly at Luigi; but Luigi was studying his pack of cards, perhaps wondering how fast he could build up a house and knock it down again.

"Go in the other room, Maria!" the captain said. She scowled, then walked away, looking back at Luigi and me.

The captain's face had become scarlet. "I don't know anything about Teresa," he said. "Luigi talks too much."

"What's she doing here?" I asked.

"She lives here."

"Like hell she does! These people are just keeping her here, and you come around so you can be entertained by her, and dance with her, and who knows what else!"

"That's Luigi's talk!"

"Maybe he's right," I said, and as I looked at Luigi I saw that he had begun once again to build his house of cards.

He worked very carefully, more carefully than he had before, taking his time, and when finally he had built the house to the third level he reached in his pocket and took out a long thin black wallet. From this he took out the playing card he had made with the picture of Uncle Sam on it. He seemed completely engrossed in his work, as if no one else was around.

He had returned the wallet to his pocket and was settling the card on top the house, when suddenly Captain Decker's foot shot out. His kick caught Luigi squarely in the chest. "You Dago bastard!" the captain shouted.

Luigi hurtled backward, then toppled over, covering himself with his arms, and rolled on the floor. He sat up ten feet away, his arms crossed on his chest, protecting it, but with no expression of pain, only a look of hate in his eyes.

"Maybe you'd better get out of here," I said to the captain. "It may not be healthy."

"Don't you tell me!" he said, his voice loud, but cracking just a little now.

I looked at his inflamed face, and he seemed almost comical for the moment. "Somebody's waiting for you," I said. "Maybe it's important. You oughn't to keep the lady waiting."

Maria had disappeared and in the doorway stood Teresa. She was smiling sweetly and she took his arm as he went past. On the phonograph an American waltz was playing. It must have been nearly worn through, for the notes wavered badly.

Luigi got up from the floor, retrieved the cheese which had been knocked away, and sat beside me again. "*Formaggio?*" he asked, as if, perhaps, nothing had happened at all.

"Are you all right?" I asked.

"I do not think he can hurt me," he said. "There are some things he may be able to do, but I do not think he can hurt me."

I took the cheese and we sat together eating.

Luigi started once more to build his house of cards, but before he was finished he apparently lost interest, for he knocked it down with his hand and let the cards lie where they had fallen. He cut a piece of bread for himself and chewed on it thoughtfully. From time to time he rubbed his chest, feeling with his fingers beneath his shirt.

"Luigi, whose side are you on?" I asked.

"Your side," he said, not quite convincingly, staring at the cards on the floor. "You're winning, aren't you?"

"Sure," I said. "We're winning."

He cut another piece of bread and handed it to me. Then he cut two slices from the cheese and we each had some.

"*Domani,*" Luigi said wearily. "Poor Italy. What will tomorrow bring?" He ate his food quietly, staring at the cards between his feet,

at the design of the parquet floor. "What will next month bring? What will ten years bring?"

"I don't know, Luigi," I said. "We're winning, though."

"Yes," he said, simply.

I felt in my pocket and took out one of the Hershey bars. Standing up I handed it to Luigi. "I've got to go now," I said. Guglielmo will drive me back to town."

"He is a good man," Luigi said. He didn't stand, but sat on the bottom step, looking up at me, holding the Hershey bar in his hands.

"*Addio*," I said, looking back at him as I went to the door.

He had begun to unwrap the candy bar. "*Arriverderci*," he said.

Outside it was dark, but up the street I could see the car. Guglielmo was waiting, one fat arm out the window.

I gave the captain's necktie to Guglielmo and asked him to return it. Then I took the other Hershey bar from my pocket and gave it to him. "I didn't see any children," I explained. He drove me back as far as the Piazza Barberini, where I caught a truck for the rest camp. The next morning I went north with a convoy, and it took us four days to reach the front.

To My Lover, with My Love

● **Alberta T. Turner**

Say only that you take my gift,
Nor thank me,
Nor remember it—
Lest thankfulness incur a debt
Upon your creditor, and lest
Love so compound
Lose interest.

My love is I—I yours—no more.
Better the glutted Minotaur
Than some less unfastidious beast
Which may, or may not, choose to taste
The richly fragmentary feast
Of beggars
At the door.

Europe from the Reformation to the Revolution

• Christopher Dawson

II. RATIONALISM AND REVOLUTION (Conclusion)*

THE extinction of the Hapsburg dynasty in Spain and the War of the Spanish Succession suddenly brought Spain and Spanish America under the rule of the Bourbons and broke the connection between Spain and Austria which had played an important part in the history of the Counter Reformation and the rise of the Baroque culture.

At first sight it may seem surprising that a mere change of dynasty should have any deep effect on a nation that was so jealous of its independence and so fiercely attached to its national and religious traditions as Spain. But though the spirit of the people was unchanged, the Spanish government in the later 17th century was in a state of such extreme disorder and impotence as to create a vacuum in the centre of the political organism. Into this vacuum there came a foreign dynasty and a new government which were naturally French in sympathy and were forced to rely on the power and prestige of Louis XIV in order to establish themselves.

Thus the 18th century in Spain was characterized by the predominance of foreign influences. The Spanish Court became a satellite of Versailles, like so many European courts of the period, and the way was open for the penetration of new men, new manners and new ideas into the very centre of national life. The result was a breach in the continuity of Spanish culture which led to the divorce of Spain from her old connections with Austria and Baroque Europe and which incorporated her artificially and externally in the new international society of French culture with which she had no organic historical relation. The Spanish people remained faithful to their old spiritual ideals and cultural traditions, but these could no longer influence the course of history as they lacked intellectual and political leadership. Thus there arose that dualism between the Gallicized culture of the ruling classes and the traditional culture of the common people which was to endure for two centuries and which produced such catastrophic results in later history. The classical French culture of the *Grand Siecle* and still more that of the 18-century Enlightenment had neither sympathy nor understanding for the ideals of the Baroque culture, and this antipathy led to a general depreciation of Spanish achievements and traditions which gradually infected the mind of the educated classes in Spain itself and produced that sense of inferiority which became char-

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**This is the final installment of* FOUR QUARTERS' *presentation of the author's recent Oriel Lectures delivered at Oxford University.*

acteristic of the *afrancesades* and liberals of the later 18th and early 19th centuries.

Nor is this surprising when we consider the changes that had taken place in Spain's international position. In the world of the Baroque culture Spain had always possessed a pre-eminent position, not merely on account of her political power but owing to the spiritual prestige of her saints and mystics and theologians. But in the new culture of the Enlightenment these spiritual achievements counted for nothing and less than nothing. Spanish culture had to start afresh as a backward pupil of the philosophers and economists whose whole scale of values contradicted that on which Spain's former greatness had been founded.

The extent to which this disavowal of the past went is to be seen in the part which Spain took in the destruction of the Society of Jesus (1767) —the event which marks the end of the great period of modern Catholic culture which had begun at the Council of Trent. Even in France the destruction of the Society (1764) was an act of political irresponsibility which was contrary to the true interests of the French monarchy. But in Spain it was much more than this: it was a suicidal act which ran counter to the whole national tradition and destroyed the keystone of the common spiritual culture which had formerly united Spain with Baroque Europe and which still united Spain with her colonial Empire.

Meanwhile in central Europe the Baroque culture still remained alive and active. Indeed the last decades of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century were the great age of the Austrian Baroque. This was the age that saw the reconquest of Hungary and Croatia from the Turks, the final defeat of the advance of Islam into eastern Europe and the re-Catholicizing of the Danubian lands under Leopold II and Charles VI. It was also the golden age of German Baroque art, when the great monasteries and pilgrimage churches of architects like the Dietzenhofers, Prandauer, Fischer von Erlach, Baltasar Neumann and Dominikus Zimmerman, were arising all over central Europe. If religious art and architecture and music are any indication, there can be no question of the vitality of Austro-German Catholic culture in the 18th century. Nevertheless this culture was the final product of a European movement which was already a thing of the past, and it could not survive the loss of its international background.

Consequently in the second half of the 18th century it came to an abrupt end, and Germany accepted the Enlightenment as suddenly and completely as she had accepted the Reformation two centuries earlier.

The transformation of German culture was due to a double movement which operated simultaneously from without and from within, from above and from below. (1) On the one hand, there was the direct influence of the French Enlightenment which acted through the courts and the rulers like Frederick II of Prussia and Joseph II of Austria; (2) on the other, there was the awakening of German Protestant culture which created a new literature and a new philosophy. It was this, far more than any political

change, which made the German middle classes conscious of their national unity and of their social importance, and this new spirit of cultural nationalism was transmitted not only to Catholic South Germany, but also to the non-German peoples of the East, like the Czechs and the Magyars, who had hitherto shared in the international unity of Baroque culture which was Latin rather than German in origin.

It was this combination of rational enlightenment and romantic nationalism which broke down the traditional order of Church and State in both Catholic and Protestant Europe and caused the complete secularization of Western culture.

The leaders of the Enlightenment were fully conscious of the revolutionary character of their work, and all through the middle decades of the 18th century they were carrying on a regular campaign of propaganda which was primarily directed against the Catholic Church as the arch-enemy of the Enlightenment.

In 1765 Voltaire wrote to Helvetius: "Do you not see that the whole of Northern Europe is on our side and that sooner or later the base fanatics of the South must be confounded. The Empress of Russia, the King of Poland, the King of Prussia, conqueror of superstitious Austria, and many other princes have raised the banner of philosophy. During the last twelve years there has been a perceptible revolution in men's minds. . . . The light is certainly spreading in all directions." (Voltaire, *Lettres* VI:X)

No doubt Voltaire neither foresaw nor desired the revolution that was actually to come. He even says in the letter I have just quoted: "I well know that the established hierarchy will not be destroyed, for the people needs one." Nevertheless the destructive criticisms of the philosophers had undermined the order of Christian culture more completely than they realized, and it only needed the coming of a dynamic emotional impulse which appealed to the masses for the revolution to become a social and political reality. This element was supplied by Rousseau and his disciples who found in the democratic ideology of *the rights of man* and the *national will* a new faith strong enough to inspire a new social and political order.

The theories of Rousseau had the same relation to the ideology of the Jacobin party as the theories of Karl Marx to the ideology of communism. Indeed there is a genetic relation between them, since the history of the modern revolutionary movement has been a continuous one, so that democracy, nationalism, socialism and communism are all of them successive or simultaneous aspects of the same process. Thus there is a socialist element in the thought of a typical nationalist like Fichte, a democratic element in Marx and a nationalist element in Stalin.

In the same way we can see in all these movements, with the partial exception of nationalism, the influence of the 18th-century Enlightenment. This continuity with 18th-century ideas is to be seen most clearly in the case of European Liberalism, which is simply the continuation of the Enlightenment in the 19th century and its adaptation to the conditions of

capitalist society. But Socialism and Communism have also remained faithful in their fashion to the belief in human progress and perfectibility and in the boundless powers of human reason and science which characterized the 18th century. Marx himself regarded the philosophical achievement of the Enlightenment as no less important than the political achievement of the Revolution and goes so far as to say that even developed communism derives directly from French 18th-century materialism.

How is this ideological view of the European revolution to be reconciled with the economic interpretation of history? In Marx's view the intellectual and the political revolution were essentially one and both were based on the economic revolution and the rise of bourgeois capitalism. And the attention of Marx was so concentrated on this last factor, especially in its industrial phase, that he tended to ignore or underestimate all the factors which did not square with his theory. Nevertheless, to anyone who studies the history of the process as a whole, it is obvious that throughout the greater part of Europe the intellectual and religious changes which produced the secularization of Western culture preceded the economic revolution and were not produced by it.

In Germany and throughout eastern Europe, as well as in Italy and Spain, the agents of change were not the new capitalist bourgeoisie but the old professional middle class, the men of letters and the professors, the lawyers and the government officials. Even in France, where economic conditions were more advanced, the capitalists who played a part in the Enlightenment were not the industrial capitalists but chiefly the "Farmers General" and the government contractors who represented a tradition as ancient as the *publicani* of the Roman Republic.

As in Russia so in Europe generally it was the intelligentsia, the class to which Marx himself belonged, and not the capitalists or the proletariat who were the real agents of change and the source of the revolutionary tradition.

The other essential factor was the political organization which these classes served—*the State:* not the popular state of the democratic ideology, but the new model of centralized absolutism which had been created by Richelieu and Louis XIV (or rather his ministers) and which had been imitated and developed by the "enlightened despots" of the following century—Peter the Great and Frederick the Great and Catherine the Great and their followers.

This affinity and collaboration between an "enlightened" intelligentsia and an enlightened despotism still persists in the Marxian tradition of the revolutionary intelligentsia and the revolutionary dictatorship, and today it has reached its ultimate conclusion in the totalitarian absolutism of Soviet communism in which the police state and the ideological party have become fused with one another and where every aspect of culture is submitted to a process of strict psychological conditioning and control in the interest of a dogmatic secularist ideology. But today this movement is

no longer a characteristically Western and European one. More and more it is passing over to Asia and becoming identified with the reaction of oriental nationalism against Western predominance and European culture.

Under these conditions what are the prospects of Western culture? It is impossible to go any further on the road of revolution and secularism which has been followed for so long, for this road has reached its ultimate conclusion. Only two alternatives remain. We can either remain in the half-way house of liberal democracy, striving desperately to maintain the higher standards of economic life which are the main justification of our secularized culture; or we can return to the tradition on which Europe was founded and set about the immense task of the restoration of Christian culture.

However difficult this task may seem to be, it is not an impossible one, for the most difficult part of it has already been accomplished: the almost miraculous survival of Christianity in a secularized culture. Two hundred years ago Christian culture was in a state of extreme decadence which affected the life of the Church itself and for which there seemed to be no human remedy. The destruction of the Society of Jesus by the action of the Catholic monarchies and the confirmation of their work by the Papacy itself marked not only the defeat of Catholicism as an international force but the self-acceptance of that defeat; and the subsequent action of the Revolution in the dechristianization of France and the secularization of the European order was only the logical completion of this process. But from that moment the tide began to turn. In comparison with the 18th century, the 19th century was an age of Catholic revival, which witnessed the restoration of the religious orders, the revival of Christian education and Christian philosophy and a new expansion of missionary activity. Above all the Church reasserted its independence of the State and became more than ever before a completely autonomous and unified international society.

Now if all this was achieved against the spirit of the age, in the face of the triumphant progress of secular civilization, it should surely be far easier to carry the process of restoration a stage further into the sphere of culture and social life, at a time when the hopes of secular progress have been so bitterly disappointed.

At the same time we must not forget that the Catholic revival of the 19th century was rendered possible by the survival of a living Christian tradition among the masses, whereas today secularism has penetrated deeply into the popular consciousness. The problem that we are facing today is therefore quite unlike that which confronted the Church in the post-Reformation period. Our position is more like that of the Christians under the Roman Empire, when the Church had on the one hand to convert the pagan masses in the great Mediterranean cities, Antioch and Ephesus and Rome, and at the same time to defend its bare right to exist against the crushing weight of an all-powerful world state which recognized no limits to its authority.

The Son of Driope

● Hatton Burke

On afternoons when sun is short,
When day is a post-death sigh,
I plod my way through myrtle fields
To where low waters lie

Lashing their arms of cooling life
At the foot of the moss-green chair;
They speak in voices deeply grooved
With accents that compare

With voices I have heard before
When soothing days of May
Fled by in soft brocaded silks
To the December of today.

It was here we came on a summer's day
Twice forty years ago,
My mother to honor the water-nymphs,
I to child-sire woe.

Now I come back when day grows sick,
Black-striping the long stemmed shore,
To stroke my mother's water-green hair
As I have often done before.

I sit and watch her rib-sharp face
Frown at its mirrored cell;
I watch her quiver with Aeolus' help,
Lamenting her bark-bound hell.

On certain days when all is still,
When twilight is benign,
She lifts the cover off her face
And with stone-set eyes on mine

Whispers to me gratingly
(in tones the water taught):
"What can assuage my punishment
So innocently wrought?"

Then she whispers, weirdly clear,
"My son, my son, I see
You don't forget my riverside grave,
My immortality.

"Tell me, son, about the world,
The happy discontent,
Your aunt, your father who never come
To ease my slow torment."

"They cannot come. They're dead," I say,
"They're sleeping endlessly.
They feed the myrtles on the hill
But never speak to me."

"I'd rather be on the hill," she says,
"Where dead are really dead,
Than lifeless here yet half alive,
And impotent with dread."

"Then I," I say, "will comfort you,
And as you to Lotus did,
Break a bough that you may die
And I may make my bid

"To stand for you these endless days,
At this life-death watering place
With moss for shoes and water-green hair
And a mirror for my face."

"No, no," she cries in sudden fear,
"The gods may yet relent
And set me free to breathe again,
And ease my discontent.

"Go up to Andraemon's side
By death-dressed Iole;
Prepare your place by theirs, my son,
For your eternity."

Her voice recedes into its moan
As wind upon a lyre.
Shadows whisper to the night,
As I soundlessly retire.

Night pulls her shawl about my face,
Now colorless and chill;
I plod my way through myrtle fields
Upward to the hill.

The Catholic College and the Catholic Writer

I. The Problem

• John S. Penny

Catholic institutions of higher learning have been in existence for 156 of the Republic's 179 years. By 1954 no less than 196 American Catholic colleges and universities possessed corporate status. The Catholic College is neither a new nor a minor phenomenon in American Society.

Several appraisals of the impact of Catholic education on contemporary American culture have been attempted in the past decade. Few are distinguished for their objectivity; fewer still are endemic or voluntarily introspective. One cause of growing concern is post-graduate intellectual achievement. This problem is forcing itself upon teachers in all departments in the various disciplines. The statistical evidence from both the Arts and Sciences fails to show any achievement advantage accruing to graduates of Catholic institutions. In the field of creative writing the situation seems particularly gloomy. The lead article to this Symposium will present the statistical evidence for this observation.

To stimulate greater study of causal factors in the Literature problem, an informal faculty-discussion group at La Salle College produced a set of questions calculated to probe forthrightly, albeit inexpertly, into the heart of the matter. Faculty members were invited to reply to the questions. This Symposium is the record of the answers and opinions of seventeen faculty respondents.

The questions and responses suggest that present day thinking on the situation will produce sharply diverse opinions, suggesting that here, as in so many other problems, no single explanation will suffice and, perhaps, no simple remedy will be found. Opinions, however, tend to group around six problem areas. The organization of the Symposium emphasizes these major problems with some of their theses.

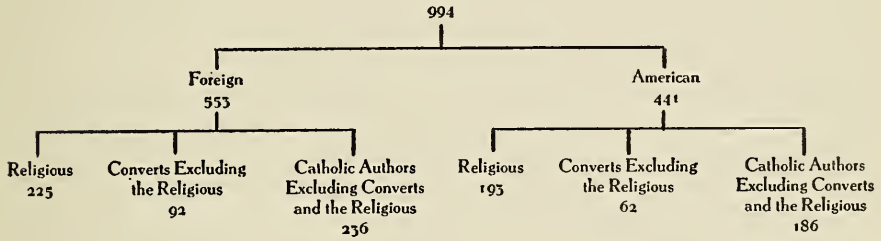
II. The Evidence

• Richard Coulson, College '57

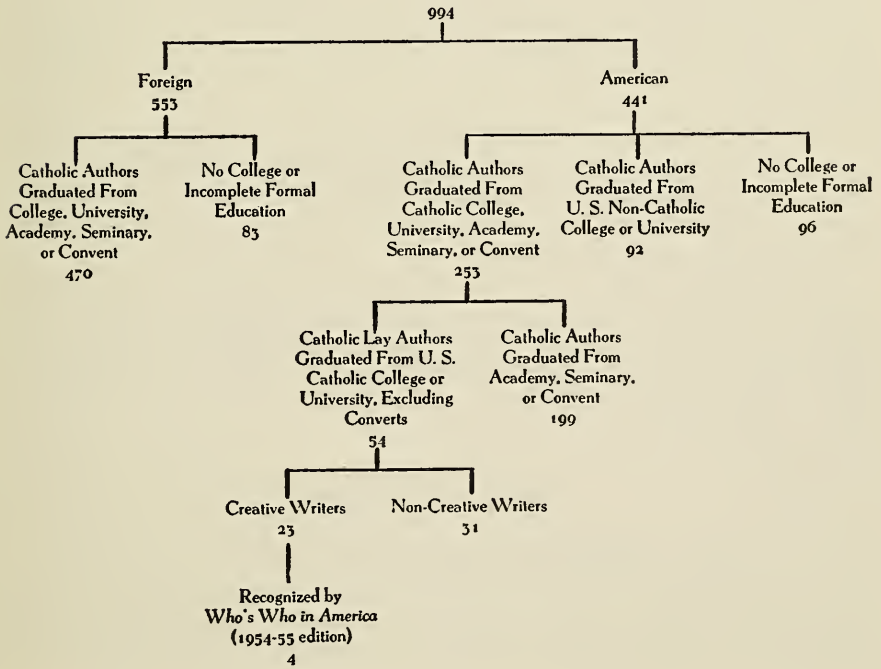
That Catholic colleges in the United States do not produce an adequate supply of Catholic writers seems to be a verifiable statement. In the Rev. Matthew Hoehn's *Catholic Authors, Contemporary Biographical Sketches, 1930-1947* and *Catholic Authors, Contemporary Sketches, 1952,* one finds that of the 994 Catholic authors listed therein, only approximately 54 American Catholic writers graduated from American Catholic colleges or universities. This list includes authors "who have died since 1930 as

well as those who are still living"; it includes those foreign writers who have had at least one of their works translated into English. Father Hoehn uses the term "Catholic Author" for any author who is a "practicing member of the Catholic Church . . . though he need not write on Catholic themes, and his thought may not necessarily reflect the mind of the Church." Included is a table of the statistics drawn from *Catholic Authors.*

TOTAL NUMBER OF CATHOLIC AUTHORS



TOTAL NUMBER OF CATHOLIC AUTHORS



A study of the accompanying table can reveal several things. Among them are the somewhat startling facts that:

1. American Catholic colleges do *not* produce many Catholic writers.
2. We are dependent upon *converts* (Thomas Merton, Claire Booth Luce, Theodore Maynard) and *foreign authors* (Evelyn Waugh, George Bernanos, Graham Greene) for the best of our Catholic literature.

In 1953 the American Library Association selected 52 outstanding religious books of that year. Only ten of those books were specifically of Catholic interest. Of those ten books only five were written by Americans:

1. Claire Booth Luce, Theodore Maynard, Thomas Merton.
2. Father James Moynihan, Father John T. Ellis.

It will be observed that those in the first group are converts to the Church, and that those in the second group are priests identified with American Catholic formal education. Therefore, according to this ALA list, no lay, non-convert, American Catholic author who graduated from an American Catholic college is represented.

The American Library List for 1953 is even less encouraging. Only five American Catholic authors are listed: Theodore Maynard, Dorothy Day, Fulton Oursler, Thomas Merton, Thomas Sugrue. The first three are laymen and converts and did not attend an American Catholic college.

Catholic Library World, which published "The Best in Catholic Reading for Adults—1954," chose 30 books written by Catholic authors. Only two Catholic writers, excluding the religious, were graduated from an American Catholic college or university: Richard Pattee and John R. Cavanagh.

During Catholic Book Week, February, 1955, thirty titles, which were prepared by a subcommittee of the National Catholic Book Week Committee, manifested Catholic thought in various fields of interest. Of the authors involved, excluding religious, Thomas P. Neill is the only American Catholic college graduate.

What is the conclusion to be drawn from these statistics? They tend to confirm Rev. F. X. Canfield's statement concerning the American Library Association's selection of outstanding books published during 1953, that there is a "dearth of truly top-flight writers among the graduates of our Catholic educational system."

III. A View

• Brother Edward Patrick, F.S.C.

An important condition for a person to become an effective creative writer is that he be a creative reader, a person whose experience in reading covers a longer period than his attempts at writing. A writer must recog-

nize good writing whenever he sees it. He must be actively critical of all writing whenever he is confronted with it. This implies that he has developed literary taste over a period of a dozen or more years: from pre-school-home experience through college days. His taste will reveal itself in his ability to detect the fraudulent from the authentic, the sentimental from the sincere, the cliché-ridden and low colloquial from the fresh and fastidious style. He must have training in knowledge about artistic writing. He must know.

Before a man can do those things, he is usually conditioned by experience in reading the best stories, novels, essays, biographies, and plays. Not the *almost* best. But the best. And in addition to this experience, he must have had an elder person, a parent or teacher who himself has good taste in literature, as a master to help him learn how to discover the joys and artistry in books. This aspect of a writer's development is fundamental and of great importance: the influence of the teacher who knows literary excellence and has the genius to impart his knowledge and communicate his enthusiasm. The person who can cause the young boy or girl to get great pleasure in reading and writing is the most valuable asset in developing future writers.

Here the educational system has not been successful. Almost all of the reading selections that a student meets in school have been collected and printed for reasons other than high literary and artistic excellence. Anthologies and the kindred texts that students use to become acquainted with the literature in English are devised for showing the history of writing and writers, for learning an apparatus to apply in analyzing a form, or for helping the student get an attitude towards democracy, history and social living, or religion. The modern book containing literary forms in high school and in college is built for a number of purposes. But the primary purpose is certainly not to develop literary taste in the student.

It may be that teachers and other instructors have depended too rigidly on such anthologies, textbooks, and helps for student readings. In such reliance they have handed over to other people (editors, publishers, professional educationists, and persons with private "axes to grind") the responsibility of acquainting the student with the best that has been written in the literature of the English speaking peoples. These books have had good writing, correct writing, even excellent writing. But good writing and excellent writing are not great enough for the needs of the future lover of literature or the creative writer of fiction and poetry. A writer must have experience with the greatest works in English, the works that are sometimes referred to as masterpieces.

Any student in college will find his writing tasks hopelessly beyond his ability if he has never read and enjoyed Chaucer, Shakespeare, Homer, the Holy Bible, Hardy, Dickens, Newman, the poets of the nineteenth century and of today, and the modern short stories, novels, biographies, and plays that all inspired and inspirational teachers enjoy and discuss

with their students. When teachers are accustomed to get delight in literature and in expressing their own thoughts and depicting emotion, they usually communicate that spirit of joy to those who sit in their classes. The number of such teachers is small.

Both in the lower schools and in college, the eager student does not often meet the kind of teacher he needs to carry him along to greater challenges. If the boy or girl has had a rapid start in things literary from parents and early teachers, he cannot be assured of similar helps when he gets to the higher classes. The truth is hard and must be faced: there are too few teachers doing the sort of imaginative work that encourages and produces discriminating readers and writers.

In some colleges where the administration has assisted the department of English by encouraging creative endeavors among the students, the results of the joint enterprise of administrators and faculty have not been greatly successful. It is an oversized task to teach those students, few in number compared with the entire enrollment, who are prepared to develop their writing abilities and who are willing and determined to make a success of their endeavors. To teach those other students who do not possess these capacities is a prodigious undertaking that often leads to discouragement.

Many teachers in the final years of high school and the first years of college find their work to be this: getting the students to unlearn many wrong things, to rid themselves of improper attitudes and habits, to rectify their stances. Almost every semester in college teaching, instructors find themselves devising ways to lead students to acquire a sympathetic attitude towards their language, their literature, and the arts in general. And many times teachers arrive at the end of the term with grave doubts that their labors have been successful.

Writing in college will improve when students come to their higher education and training with years of experience in reading creatively and in writing honestly and sincerely, an experience that very few students ever get. As often happens in this mid-twentieth century, the four years of college are spent in doing things that should have been done in earlier years, such things as reading widely and effectively, writing clearly and imaginatively, and speaking carefully and intelligently. These achievements are always in the equipment of young successful writers when they leave high school and enter college. A poll of successful writers today would undoubtedly show that a sizable number of them were writing creatively before their fifteenth birthday. And their reading experience would show that it started in advance of fourteen.

High school courses in literature and in self-expression must be taught by men and women who are happy and enthusiastic doing that kind of teaching. Nothing else will do. Instructors must be of heroic cast, self-sacrificing and unusually audacious. No other kind of person can get results. The vocation of teacher will make gifted men and women over-

come obstacles and transcend the limitations placed on them by school and student and the home.

When colleges get students from such men and women, the instructors and professors will employ means to encourage the talented and energetic young people who wish to write. Men and women with enriched natures, persons who themselves have the ability and the urge to write creatively, will be needed to launch the young student on the waters. And the demand will instigate the supply.

Those men and women who have a devotion to teaching that seems to impinge on the fanatical are the type of people needed to encourage and produce creative writers. Teaching is an unassuming job that is done behind closed doors and in a quiet, unspectacular manner; and writing is a lonely, solitary labor that demands large blocks of time from its devotees. Both of these professions require a discipline and a quality that is almost an eccentricity. And it may very well be that in this day of conformity there aren't enough of such eccentrics to beget motion towards developing creative writers. They certainly cannot be found in any perceptible number in colleges.

IV. A Faculty Symposium

"Does American Catholic Education Produce its Share of Leaders in the Literary Field?"

Participants:

Austin J. App, Ph.D. (*Department of English*)
Brother D. Augustine, F.S.C., Ph.D. (*Department of Sociology*)
Brother F. Azarias, F.S.C., M.A. (*Department of Education*)
Donald N. Barrett, M.A. (*Department of Sociology*)
C. Richard Cleary, Ph.D. (*Department of Government*)
Brother Damian Julius, F.S.C., Ph.D. (*Department of Mathematics*)
Brother Daniel Bernian, F.S.C., Ph.D. (*Vice President*)
Eugene J. Fitzgerald, M.A. (*Department of Philosophy*)
Howard H. Hannum, M.A. (*Department of English*)
Rev. Mark Heath, O.P., Ph.D. (*Department of Religion*)
Claude F. Koch, M.A. (*Department of English*)
John F. McGlynn, M.A. (*Department of English*)
Brother E. Patrick, F.S.C., M.A. (*Department of English*)
John S. Penny, Ph.D. (*Department of Biology*)
Brother G. Robert, F.S.C., M.A. (*Department of English*)
Brother E. Stanislaus, F.S.C., Ph.D. (*President*)
Brother D. Vincent, F.S.C., Ph.D. (*Department of Psychology*)

AN EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM?

1. The "Impoverished Curriculum" Thesis:

May we trace the dearth of Catholic writers in America to a tendency for Catholic colleges to place more emphasis on business and technological courses than on the liberal disciplines?

BROTHER E. STANISLAUS: "Granted that there is a larger enrollment in business and technological courses, this is not peculiar to Catholic institutions of higher learning. It is true of higher education throughout the United States. Therefore, I do not think it correct to assume that the preponderance of enrollments in these areas implies an emphasis in those directions. The weight of enrollment figures in the areas of business education and technological training indicates that the demand is greatest there and colleges are simply meeting that demand. This demand, in turn, is created by the economic and labor patterns in effect today.

"There is little reason to expect that enrollment in the liberal disciplines be higher than they are. The liberal arts program is the program where IDEAS should be instilled. This is the GREAT IDEA curriculum. We cannot expect all our students to follow this program. But those who do follow it should absorb our full attention. They are numerous enough to justify our complete devotion. It is this group which should be prepared to enter society as intellectual and cultural leaders. It is from this group that we should expect our thinkers and our writers.

"It is my conviction that our institutions of higher learning fail to develop liberal arts majors to their fullest capacity; fail to instil in them the true liberal disciplines. Too often they are permitted to become lost in the mass; even to follow programs with other majors, such as business, science, engineering, etc., and thus make it possible for the practical and material approach to vitiate the truly liberal program. This group should be segregated. One way in which the ideals of a liberal education will be restored to the position which they merit is to have the colleges themselves render them the honor that is their due. This honor may be expressed through curricular patterns which present the true liberal program. The sharpest indictment of colleges today may be found in their failure to offer to the students a true liberal program. Further, it is this area, since its vital importance is so strongly emphasized, that should attract the most effective members of the faculty, men of learning and culture who can inspire students to a virile and keen intellectuality, to a life of cultural and aesthetic appreciation, and far more important, a life of goodness in which there is a true appreciation of spiritual values. The faculty of the liberal arts program should be composed of men of wisdom and of goodness with the facility to communicate wisdom and inspire goodness."

Brother G. Robert: "Traditionally, Catholic education should be liberal. 'Christian education,' according to Pope Pius XI, 'takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic, and social.' A graduate of the three 'R's,' varnished and garnished with specific technical skills, cannot be judged a truly educated man. Catholic education has been guilty of following the national trend of 'education for life'—where 'life' is synonymous with the forty-hour week. Catholic education has been guilty of wilting before the pressure of those immature high school graduates who insist upon such an 'education for life.' These factors have impoverished the curricula of our colleges, Catholic as well as secular. The paucity of truly liberal subjects most certainly causes intellectual, cultural, and spiritual undernourishment, particularly in those fields essential for leaders in literature. What a pity! The common concept of the hungry artist nourishing the minds of generations has faded into the modern picture of the 'educated' technician feeding the machines of temporality."

Mr. Fitzgerald: "To maintain our existence in this secular climate we have been compromising our position unceasingly. Think of the pressure from 'business' alumni alone."

Mr. Koch: "The difficulty is part of a larger atmosphere of thought that has to do with the arts in general. Perhaps because the majority of the Catholics going to college in America (I assume this to be true) are from middle class families—families that have struggled in a society that holds a general contempt for the arts—the Catholic colleges must cater to the kind of vocational education that the students' parents desire their sons to have. The arts are a luxury (a frivolity) that do not necessarily hurt the student, but they can hardly be called essential to the student's welfare in technological America. If this is a false position (and if it exists, as I feel sure that it does), the colleges must be educated first. A man does not have to like any particular art, but it is hard for me to see how anyone who has studied the Catholic tradition in the arts can deny their necessity and their power in fashioning a spiritually strong community."

Brother F. Azarias: "I take the position that no Catholic writer of either skill or competence will emerge from the courses that we now have unless these courses are entered by those with a sufficient personal pre-college training to advance through them at their own rate of speed and with their own ambitions."

2. The "Vacuum" Thesis:

How valid is the criticism that formalistic and pragmatic training in Catholic colleges does not provide the necessary breadth and

perspective to enable students to capture the "flavor of reality." In other words, that Catholics do not write simply because they have nothing important to say?

FATHER MARK HEATH: "The phrases *formalistic* and *pragmatic* don't communicate anything. An education in morals which proceeds too much from principles and not from problems may not show the students that the moral and spiritual teaching of the Church is relevant to the problems of life and of literature."

DR. CLEARY: "This thesis does not, in my judgment, fit the facts of contemporary America, though it may have some validity for earlier periods or other areas."

BROTHER G. ROBERT: "What educated Catholics should say today is as exciting and revolutionary as what illiterate fishermen did say two thousand years ago. The materials of Catholicism have not changed, but have rather been enriched and ennobled by centuries of philosophical study and theological science. The fault is not in our heritage but in ourselves. Perhaps our teaching is too formalistic, pragmatic. To revolutionize our pedagogical technique, however, is futile, for the cure must come only through the individual teacher; and through what he can impart of his revolutionized self to the individual student. In each instance, pupil-teacher contact must be premised upon the awful realizations of our position in the scheme of life—as finite man and his relations to the infinite God, as selfish man and his relations to his blood brothers, as individualistic man and his relations to a necessary society."

DR. APP: "Catholics have something to say but somehow do not feel the urgency to say it: they have not been made to realize that when Our Lord said, 'Go teach all nations,' He meant it for every Catholic, lay or cleric."

BROTHER E. STANISLAUS: "The dearth of Catholic writers may be partially explained by the dearth of Catholic-trained men of ideas. And there is a paucity of men of ideas because our colleges do not produce them. And our colleges do not produce them because they have failed—by default—in presenting the liberal arts; a failure more tragic because the liberal disciplines are truly a Catholic heritage and no institution has a greater right to their preservation than our college institutions. Some of our Catholic colleges have recognized this fact and are carrying on self-studies and are experimenting with programs. Notre Dame, St. Mary's College, St. Xavier's College, Manhattan College, are actively engaged in this work and are in advanced stages of experimentation."

3. The "Mediocrity" Thesis:

Do you subscribe to the opinion that an "utter mediocrity" of American Catholicism is the basis of a vicious circle: poor Catholic literature ⇌ poor Catholic audience?

DR. CLEARY: "This may be a contributing factor, though I have no strong opinion on this proposition. In any case, I do not perceive how emphasis upon this analysis could conduce to a remedy for the shortage of Catholic literary leaders."

BROTHER G. ROBERT: "I believe this vicious circle is a definite, though partial cause of the mediocrity of Catholic literature. A vicious circle will continue to spin upon itself until it is broken by a positive action. And that action can last be taken on the college level. While mature judgment is forming, a literary audience can be assembled. While budding talent is cultivated, the advantages of a literary vocation can be explored."

FATHER MARK HEATH: "The colleges ought to produce readers. In the main all American colleges have not done as much in this field as they should. On the other hand, the volume of Catholic reading increases. Sheed and Ward are more prosperous now than ever; they were founded on an act of faith in the Catholic colleges to produce readers of good books."

4. The "Authoritarian" Thesis:

Is it true that the reverence for authority inculcated during formative years in Catholic training makes Catholic college students intellectually lazy?"

DR. APP: "They are intellectually lazy but I doubt that it comes from any reverence for authority."

BROTHER D. BERNIAN: "How explain then 'intellectual saint'? I do believe, however, the virtue of 'humility' as so often taught, engenders and gives excuse for the wall-flowers among Catholic leaders and writers."

MR. FITZGERALD: "Not lazy so much as fearful that they might trespass on ecclesiastical domain."

FATHER HEATH: "Docility is a virtue in students. Perhaps this reverence for authority makes them possess the truth more surely. Perhaps the experience of being reverenced as an authority makes Catholic teachers lazy—in that they do not work to present the problem and show the relevance of the solution."

5. The "Dogmatism" Thesis:

Do you believe that the Catholic college curriculum is prone to dogmatize in its desire to teach "structured truths" and that this has a stifling effect on the minds of students?

FATHER HEATH: "Not the curriculum. Where it dogmatizes it must: in revealed religion. In all other fields the dogmatizing comes from the professor who finds it easier that way. But where does dogmatizing begin and teaching end?"

DR. APP: I do think that the fear of running afoul of the dogmas may tend to divert a few potential writers into safer fields, or at least serve as an alibi for shifting into more lucrative professions where the danger of courting heresy is less."

BROTHER DAMIAN: "I cannot see that this thesis can be applied to a large enough group of teachers or students to have any appreciable effect. Certainly a college student does not accept knowledge without certain minimum motives of credibility. If he does accept conclusions without these motives, it is not because he is a Catholic. Either he is not college caliber or the teacher is deficient in knowledge or in zeal. A knowledge of 'structured truths' does not exclude a knowledge of other theories. It would seem a knowledge of 'structured truths' would be an asset. It would give the student a frame of reference whereby he could evaluate theories from a consistent viewpoint."

MR. FITZGERALD: "Dogma and 'structured truths' do not have to stifle if they are received by minds which are flexible enough to distinguish the reasons why a thing is expressed and elucidated in this fashion."

BROTHER D. BERNIAN: "It is not the 'what' that causes the stifling effect, it's the 'how.' "

BROTHER G. ROBERT: "When we extend dogmatism to non-dogmatic areas, or when we permit our students to associate our religious authoritarianism with secular learning, we fail as teachers and as scholars. The temptation is great, and the path we must tread is narrow. But, unless we too are guilty of intellectual laziness, that path can be trod. Else whence our sainted philosophers, and scientists, and artists? Indeed, for them the unboundaried riches of faith imparted increased capacity, deeper understanding, and clearer perspective. Far from acting as an intellectual soporific, the certitude founded on our faith should enable us to realize more clearly and to teach more fitly the majestic interrelations of God and man."

6. The "Techno-Cultural" Thesis:

Does the fact that much of modern fiction employs the stream-of-consciousness technique and modifications of it, techniques more

suitable to the individualism and so-called "open-mindedness" of modern times, present additional problems to the Catholic writer?

Mr. Hannum: "The problem of the Catholic writer might well be dual, or more complex than the cultural view alone would suggest. Not only does he need a fabric of life as referent for the aesthetic elements of his fiction, but he also needs a technique in harmony with presentation of that fabric. He may find that existing techniques present problems for his readers and himself. Such devices as stream-of-consciousness, 'flashback,' and *in medias res*, which have been given prominence in modern fiction (re-enforced by motion pictures and television), will perhaps not serve the Catholic writer's purpose. To suggest that he return to 'traditional' methods of story telling would be to assume the outcome of the developing fabric of Catholicism. If organic unity of Catholic fiction is to be preserved, a new technique or significant modifications of existing techniques might be found necessary, in an age when both non-Catholic and Catholic readers are being schooled along current lines of development in fiction. The resistance to technical innovations in the second and third decades of the present century illustrates the possible magnitude of this problem.

Father Heath: "Technique in itself is indifferent. The faith should be able to assimilate any technique."

Brother G. Robert: "One historical attribute of the Christian culture has been its ability to meet other cultures and absorb from them what is good. As this Catholic flexibility has involved ritual in the past, so it can include technique in modern literature. The publicized 'modern' techniques are modes of human communication, not evil in themselves."

Brother D. Bernian: " 'The style is the man.' "

7. The "Missing Stimulus" Thesis:

Do you agree that Catholics (converts excepted), lacking a "sense of mission," have neither the motivation nor the compulsion to write?

Brother D. Bernian: "This does not appear so, except in countries materially at ease. Men like Claudel, Bernanos, Mauriac and Dostoievsky (Russian Orthodox) had the mission and the stimulus."

Dr. Cleary: "I doubt it. What was Shakespeare's 'sense of mission'? In the case of literarily prominent converts, how many achieve success only after conversion? Or solely because of conversion? How many, on the other hand, were led to the true faith largely because they earnestly sought truth—a characteristic of all sincere writers."

DR. APP: "The 'sense of mission' is certainly and lamentably lacking in Catholic college graduates, otherwise more of them would write. The problem is 'Why is it lacking?' "

DR. PENNY: "We may never know the answer to this query. How can motivations be assessed and compared? Who can estimate here the role of the subconscious? Some kind of motivation must precede any effort at artistry, and it would seem a reasonable hypothesis that the motivations for 'creative' writing are of a higher order than those of routine descriptive or reportorial writing. But vigorous proof of the need for a 'sense of mission' for literary creativity would, it seems to me, be most difficult to obtain. On the contrary, there is some evidence that the well-springs of motivation for some artistic efforts may be deviously obscure, not necessarily lofty, praiseworthy, or even 'normal.' One modern theory, stated in its severest terms, suggests that a compulsion towards artistic creativity may be a psychotic tendency."

BROTHER D. VINCENT: "A psychologist would probably see this problem as just another aspect of the general problem of the dynamics of action and inaction in the human personality. Generally speaking, and putting it very briefly, people don't act either because they don't need to act, or needing to act, they can't. The need for something such as food, water, security, love, gives rise to tension which in turn produces action—a driving, a searching for something to satisfy the need, an answer to the problem—this is motivation. Presumably, Catholics having found the answers, having their 'basic needs' satisfied with the possession of God and His truth, are no longer restless with the search—have no reason, no motivation, for action. If this be true—and it probably is—then they fail on this point in another way—they fail to see the needs of others and to identify with them. This would be a way in which Catholics are affected by the lack of real charity in the modern world. Psychologically, it comes down to a lack of natural charity—what psychologists call 'empathy'—the projection of ourselves into the lives of others in a way in which the experiences of others become our experiences, their needs, our needs. This is a common failure behind many of our problems today, and in Catholics leads to a failure in the apostolic mission to give to others what they themselves have found. I think we are so concerned with supernatural virtue, we fail to emphasize sufficiently the natural—'psychological'—virtues.

"On the other hand, there is often a need for action and aggression, but people find themselves incapable of carrying out the needed action for psychological reasons—inhibited by personality blocks. These blocks to action are either the fear of action, or the lack of knowledge—the failure to learn—how to act. Action, aggression, self-expression are learned like carpentry or playing third base—by doing

them. This requires freedom of opportunity and training in accordance with individual capacity. Psychologists know that the passive, dependent, 'submissive' personality—lacking initiative and enterprise, lacking the ability to think and act for oneself, to express oneself, to rely on oneself to attack problems on one's own, to make decisions—is the result either of fear developed when one was punished for trying these things and making mistakes, or due to lack of opportunity to learn how to do them because of dominating, over-protecting, 'authoritarian' parental attitudes—due to parents who do not encourage self-expression, self-reliance, freedom of action, but who lead the child's life for him, solve all his problems, do all his thinking, his expressing and his acting. We find it necessary to distinguish between authority and 'authoritarianism'; between obedience and 'submissiveness.' These are such tricky, deceiving things because they look so much alike. Authority leads to respect and obedience—virtue and character; 'authoritarianism' leads to fear and 'submissiveness'—distorted personality. The terms 'authoritarianism' and 'submissiveness' have very specific meanings today as undesirable forms of behavior both in the restricted field of psychology and the general literature. 'Authoritarianism,' though damaging and undesirable, is understandable—it is a kind of 'halo effect,' a generalization, a spreading out into fields where it is improper and damaging, of a basic authority which in its restricted and proper field leads to goodness and self-realization. This author suggests that just as the 'authoritarianism'—'momism'—in the parent produces the passive, dependent child, so the authoritarian atmosphere—'paternalism'— in the world of the Catholics, extending down to our classrooms and our simpler relationships, might possibly explain some of the lack of initiative and self-expression—the lack of leadership—we find in Catholic students and Catholics generally.

"We condemn Dewey's concept of self-expression and freedom of thought and action (good in itself) which spreads to the extremes where a child never learns self-discipline; possibly we have permitted our dogmatic and didactic approach (perfectly proper in the field of dogma and morals and basic Church government) to become exaggerated into the general fields of thought and action, and in the training of our children, to the point where the child never learns self-expression. After all, if a child at six or sixteen is supposed to be seen but not heard, we should not be surprised if at sixty he is still seen and not heard. You can have it either way, but you can't have it both ways."

A SOCIOLOGICAL PROBLEM?

8. The "Minority-Status" Thesis:

Do you feel that because the United States is a Protestant country, Catholic writers find the environment unfriendly?

BROTHER D. AUGUSTINE: "Catholics are not particularly conscious of their minority status. For the most part, they are only vaguely aware of religious conflict other than Communism's attack on religion. The stimulus of battle is lacking principally perhaps because they read too little and find the Catholic press especially dull. They are provincial, have little or no historical perspective and are content to 'live and let live.' The spirit of *sentire cum Ecclesia* fails to stir them to activity in the lay apostolate which would include contributions to literature on the part of Catholics. It might be a good thing to alert Catholics to the latent and open hostility that surrounds them."

DR. CLEARY: "The thesis is possible, but English Catholics seem to have been stimulated rather than repressed by an even more pronounced 'minority-status.'"

MR. BARRETT: "American mores are historically Protestant, but currently expedient and secular. An active, self-conscious minority may fight this culture successfully, since it is highly susceptible to the impact of strong values. A passive minority, however, tends to accept the prevailing customs as criteria of success. The latter makes Catholic writers culturally schizoid."

FATHER HEATH: "Some Catholics indeed do find their status unfriendly, but it seems to me that those who are afraid of the environment are those who would not produce good Catholic writing anyway. This reason has little effect on the problem. If anything, the presence of non-Catholics highlights the apostolic need of writing, and motivates many people to write."

A SPIRITUAL PROBLEM?

9. The "Smugness" Thesis:

How valid is the criticism that Catholics are intellectually lazy, partly because they are smug in the realization that they have the truth and feel no sense of the need to present this truth (for example in creative writing) to others?

BROTHER D. BERNIAN: "This attitude is probably only a front for an inferiority complex caused by the sense of defending something great but with a consciousness of not being strong enough nor well enough equipped to defend this mysterious greatness."

MR. MCGLYNN: "I think this thesis has validity, though it applies more pointedly to the critic and teacher than to the embryo writer.

"In his foreword to a collection of critical essays on contemporary novelists, Harold C. Gardiner, S.J., writes, 'Many a reader will probably be surprised to see that critics who are Catholics have some kind

things to say of James Joyce.' In context, the remark is not so condescending as it sounds alone, but it is still germane to the question above.

"The sincere Catholic has a certainty about his life and destiny on earth that are possibly unique today. And his training in a Catholic college tends to formalize this certainty and crystallize it into attitudes. The result is sometimes, I fear, an intolerance for any mere struggle with belief, a distrust of those literary modes that attempt to deal with reality in purely human terms. Ours is a fragmented world and many writers, honestly motivated, never seem to reach a faith in God, or only very deviously, in a whole lifetime of work. A teacher of literature in a Catholic college who cannot recognize the vital honesty of, say, Theodore Dreiser because there is no supernatural background to his novels is discouraging the potential writers in his class by denying the struggle towards God and affirming only the goal."

DR. CLEARY: "The thesis is possibly correct, but, if so, why would this factor affect American Catholics more than co-believers in a variety of different religious climates abroad?"

10. The "Puritanism" Thesis:

Can you believe that few writers develop from Catholic schools because of a residual puritanism that makes incipient writers reluctant to treat such themes as love and sex as they feel they should be treated to be true and valid?

DR. APP: "I believe that many Catholic writers of expository prose and lyric poetry shrink from attempting fiction and drama because these would require a treatment of love and sex; some such writers fear that a realistic and truthful treatment of these might provoke disapproval among certain, perhaps semi-puritanical, Catholic critics."

FATHER HEATH: "The thesis states 'as they feel they should be treated.' If they 'feel' in accordance with Christian modesty, perhaps. It is probably not puritanism but Christian virtue that keeps most Catholics from attempting this sort of work."

BROTHER D. BERNIAN: "In the United States, yes. In general, no. In fact, Mauriac who gives the 'impression' that he is obsessed with the problem of love and sex was the victim, as he admits, of a Puritanism during his youth."

11. The "Extra-Mundane" Thesis:

Does the Catholic college set up a dichotomy between the natural and supernatural destinies of man and in emphasizing the ultimate

triviality of the former discourage the creative writer who is concerned with the specifically human, earth-bound predicament of man?

MR. FITZGERALD: "But the creative writer who is concerned *specifically* with the 'human, earth-bound predicament of man' would be the antithesis of what the Catholic college tries to impart. We can't be literary schizoids."

FATHER HEATH: "Yes, though the Catholic writer sees the eternal dimension in this life and writes that way has a power that is great. In fact, great writing of any sort touches on this ultimate, it seems to me; and a Catholic should be more aware of it, and more able to express it."

BROTHER D. BERNIAN: "I don't think so. Witness the popularity in the twentieth century of those who created a strong union and a strange blend of the natural and supernatural—El Greco, the Spanish painter; Dostoievsky, the Russian novelist; and Bernanos, the French novelist."

MR. MCGLYNN: "Perhaps the problem is not one of insisting on the dichotomy but of attempting to disregard it. I think of the current spate of novels about whiskey priests and gunmen masked as priests and all manner of sacrilege. The subject matter is Catholic and so Catholic readers and reviewers take the books to their hearts, failing to observe that the technique is often shoddy and the spiritual insight superficial. It reaches a point where one must reluctantly agree with the reviewer of a lately filmed version of a Graham Greene's novel who accuses Greene of having 'written about God with a familiarity . . . that verges on unintentional contempt.'

"Catholic critics and teachers would do well to hold in abeyance —without ever denying, of course—their religious convictions when they deal with art as art. For the aspiring writer, it is the craft of writing, not any theology or philosophy in the background, that is most vital. He should learn to write from imitating the great writers of the past, and from imitating Faulkner and Hemingway, who are the creative men of letters for our time, dedicated to their craft. It is from them that the embryo novelist will catch fire as a writer, and not, certainly, from pietistic, and really dishonest, tales that plant miracles in Macy's department store, or from shockers that race God against adultery. The aim of an instructor in a creative writing course should be to make writers, not saints."

12. The "Claudel" Thesis:

Must all art "bear witness to Christ"? In an alien atmosphere must a Catholic author be ready to be a martyr for his art as well as for his faith?

MR. FITZGERALD: "Yes, or he is not a 'Catholic author' in the true sense of the words. We cannot live in two separate worlds."

BROTHER D. BERNIAN: "Yes, to the degree that he would be expected to be a martyr to his 'convictions.' "

AN HISTORICAL PROBLEM?

13. The "Unripe Culture" Thesis:

Is it an historically valid observation that the Catholic population generally in the United States is still too near the pioneer stage to have developed a culture productive of contemplative and artistic brilliance?

DR. APP: A study of the history of literature tends to indicate that the essential reason for the literary unproductiveness of American Catholicism is its cultural unripeness, its being still in an intermediate stage of culture, that between the theological and the humane, a sort of Renaissance stage, when catechetical knowledge is broadening into philosophical and scientific interests but has not yet embraced the arts and literature. Converts so often write because when converted they had already been reared in a culturally advanced atmosphere."

FATHER HEATH: "I do not think so. It is as mature as anything European."

BROTHER D. BERNIAN: "I doubt that a deep spirit of contemplation is due primarily to the culture of the country. Contemplative brilliance is a personal and individual production."

MR. FITZGERALD: "No, unless we believe that American culture is or should be distinct from Western Christian culture."

BROTHER E. STANISLAUS: "The climate in which American higher education is working demands a restudy of traditional European concepts. Moreover, a typically American culture is evolving and this requires close and serious examination of our philosophy of education. There is no doubt that American higher education is undergoing a process of evolution and development which will make of it an institution not at all like its old-world counterpart. And this is equally true of the American Catholic college."

AN ECONOMIC PROBLEM?

14. The "Poor-Wage" Thesis:

Do you think it a valid argument that more Catholics in the United States do not write because Catholic publishing houses and magazines pay so little?

DR. CLEARY: "This sounds quite plausible. It should be stressed that in the field of scholarly writing, non-Catholic and secular academic institutions, generally speaking, make fuller, more efficacious use of the appropriate material means to foster writing and publication. Catholic universities and colleges appear to do far less to support and encourage creative and scholarly writing of any kind. My limited knowledge and experience indicates the same defect in Catholic as contrasted with non-Catholic publishers.

"In my opinion, the American Catholic press, publishers, universities and colleges have a poor record, generally speaking, in the fostering of art and scholarship. While there are notable exceptions to this harsh generalization, it is not difficult to discover appalling extremes of material handicaps suffered by potential Catholic writers and scholars, as a consequence of the policies and practices of the institutions they serve. If overwork or a protracted struggle for subsistence were in fact a catalyst for literary creation, Catholic letters and scholarship would have achieved its Golden Age in twentieth century America.

"Intimately connected with the economic aspect is the problem of morale. The aspirations and ambitions of a potentially creative person can easily survive material privation and handicaps, even when these are protracted. If there is no reasonable chance of enlarged opportunity and material means for the future, however, these qualities cannot so readily survive."

FATHER HEATH: "I do not defend the practice of the houses. I daresay that higher pay would increase the quantity of the writing by Catholics. I do not think that it would add to the quality of it."

DR. APP: "It is certainly true that many Catholics are deterred from writing because Catholic markets pay so little. But they pay so little because thirty million Catholics have on the whole not yet reached the cultural level where they want to include good novels and good plays and good poetry in their budget, even if it means driving their model car a year longer or missing some boxing match or sometimes drinking tea or even water instead of something better. Our American Catholics are just struggling out of the stage where they tried to improve upon 'the loaf of bread, the jug of wine,' but had not yet included also 'the book of verses' as among their needs for contentment and a full life."

MR. KOCH: "Catholic creative artists are not such because of the financial rewards they may receive. But financial insecurity may be a deterrent to prospective creative writers. Catholic colleges in their own right could, perhaps, contribute to an alleviation of this 'poor-wage' thesis in several ways. First, they could establish writers in residence. In general, I believe it true that an institution must have someone, around whom a community of writers can develop. If the college's financial

resources do not admit the establishment of a Lectureship in English, the institution can at least engage a writer to teach the craft and area in which he is expert. If he is well-established and nationally respected, scholarly degrees should not be of primary importance. I feel, of course, that this idea should extend to artists in residence, as well as writers and poets.

"Secondly, Catholic colleges should show their appreciation of the function of art by offering more honorary degrees to deserving writers and artists. It is interesting to reflect that an LL.D. would be considered a valuable asset if the writer wanted to teach. And, too, if the man was honored thus, he would bring honor upon the institution that so recognized him.

"Thirdly, alumni and Catholic laymen generally should be willing to contribute some of the resources the tax people permit to support colleges and their publications so that they might sponsor prize contests for young writers to encourage in a practical way their creative efforts."

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *We are grateful to the faculty members who contributed to our Symposium. The freedom and informality suggested by the questionnaire is responsible for the unevenness observed in the responses. As stated in the introduction to the problem, we recognize that no single explanation, nor simple remedy, may be forthcoming. But perhaps under the stimulus of this Symposium, more thoughtful consideration will be given the problem. We invite response—in the form of articles, letters, comments —from our readers.)*

Contributors

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON concludes in this issue his study of European cultural forces. JOHN A. LYNCH is on the English faculty at Notre Dame University. BRO. E. FIDELIS teaches in La Salle High School. ALBERTA T. TURNER lives in Oberlin, Ohio. HATTON BURKE teaches at the University of Florida. The lead articles to the Faculty Symposium were contributed by BRO. E. PATRICK, who has taught creative writing courses for a number of years, and RICHARD COULSON, an undergraduate at La Salle College.

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